

**Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0007-EA

December 17, 2013

AZA 036143 – UNS/Payne Extension

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
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Written by: Maria Troche
Signed on: January 27, 2014



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office

EA Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0007-EA

Serial Case File: AZA 036143

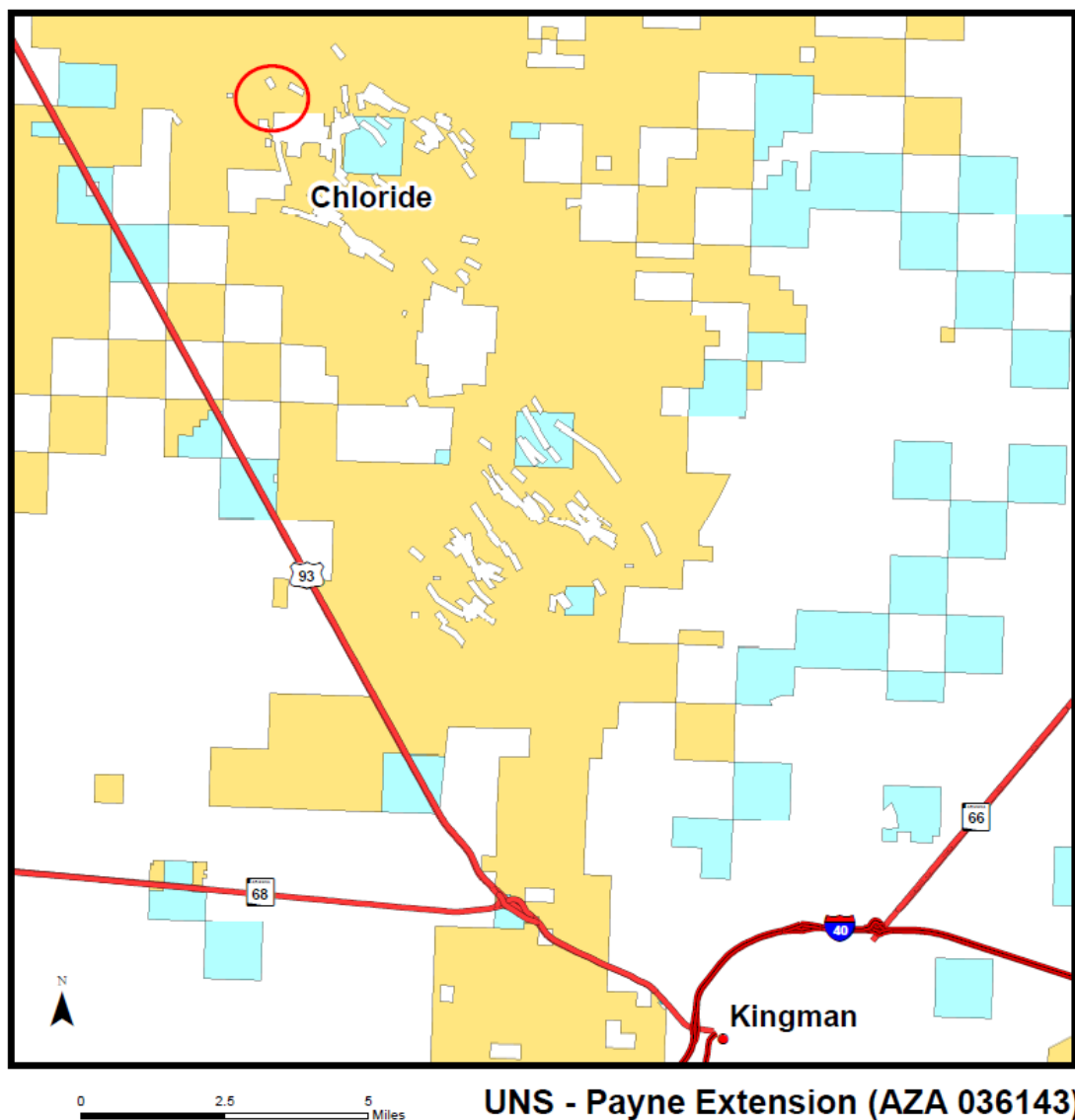
Proposed Action Title/Type: Right-of-Way - UNS/Payne Extension

Location of Proposed Action: sec. 33, T. 24 N., R. 18 W. and sec. 4, T. 23 N., R. 18 W. G&SRM.

Applicant: Unisource Electric, Inc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Unisource Electric, Inc. (UNS) has applied for a right-of-way (ROW) across federal lands to construct a single phase electrical distribution line. The line will provide power to a private residence on Juno patented mining claim (M.S. 542), north of the town of Chloride, in Mohave County, Arizona.



A. Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plan

This proposed action is in conformance with the Kingman Resource Management Plan approved March 1995. Remarks: RMP Decision number and narrative: **Decision LR13a:** Minor ROWs would be evaluated through the environmental review process and granted or rejected on a case-by-case basis. Existing ROWs would be used when possible to minimize surface disturbance (Kingman RMP, p. 66). *Comment: ROW AZA 036143 is considered to be a minor ROW.*

B. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the action is to respond to UNS's application (SF299 "Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands") received November 6, 2012 for a right-of-way to construct a 12kV single phase distribution line on Federal Lands in the Chloride area of Mohave County, Arizona. The need for the action is established by the BLM's responsibility under the Federal Land Management and Policy Act and 43 CFR Part 2800 to grant or deny a ROW upon the submission of a complete application.

C. Decision to be Made

The BLM Authorized Officer will decide to grant the ROW described in the Proposed Action Alternative, deny the application, or approve it with modifications.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The proposed action would be to authorize ROW AZA 036143 as described in the Plan of Development (see Exhibit 1 below). The power line will be located on public land identified as T. 24 N., R. 18 W., Section 33 and T. 23 N., R. 18 W., Section 4. (see Maps 1 and 2 below). Private lands affected are the patented Juno land in Section 33, the Payne residence. The proposed action is for a right of way 4370.94 feet in length and 20 feet in width. Approximately 3817 feet will be on BLM land and 553 feet will be on private land. Public lands affected are approximately 1.81 acres and the project total is 2.11 acres. The area for the guy anchors are 25 feet in length and 10 feet in width. The 12kV distribution line will be on 40 & 45 foot, Class 2, wood poles, with 6-7 feet in ground for a net height of 34-38 feet. Spans between poles will be approximately 300 feet and there will be 11 new poles on public lands and 5 poles on private land. There will be 9 sets of guy anchor assemblies at 5 angle points and at the beginning and ending points. Non-specular conductors will be used and the line will be designed to be raptor proof. There will be no fencing, welding, concrete work, grading, permanent foundations, and road building expected on public lands in order to construct the line. Access for construction of the line will be by the existing bladed road to Kalamazoo Minerals and overland travel. Two track paths may be created along the right of way and between poles. Poles will be laid out along the Road to Kalamazoo Minerals which leads to the Payne property. Due to the non-linear access road, and the linear power line design, there will be a need for some spur roads to pole locations. The spur roads of 12 feet will be overland travel may occur and will not be bladed. There are seven proposed spur roads with a combined length of 374 feet. This contributes an additional 0.10 acres to the permit area. The line will be fed by existing three-phase powerline authorized under AZPHX 034352.

B. DESCRIPTION OF NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative the application for the ROW would be denied.

This topographic map shows the area around Chloride, Arizona. Key features include:

- Topography:** Contour lines indicate elevations ranging from approximately 3800 to 5200 feet. Silver Hill is a prominent feature with a peak elevation of 5247 feet.
- Water Features:** The Schuylkill River flows through the area, with several smaller creeks and streams.
- Infrastructure:** Old Hwy 62 runs horizontally across the middle of the map. A grid of streets is shown in the town of Chloride, including Emerson Ave, Fourth St, Shuylkill Ave, and others.
- Landmarks:** The Juno Mine is located on Silver Hill, highlighted by a purple rectangle. Other labeled features include the Grave, Silver Hill, and various mines like Argus and Elkhorn.
- Annotations:** A purple rectangle highlights a specific area on Silver Hill, likely the site of interest. A blue line runs horizontally across the map, possibly indicating a boundary or a specific elevation.

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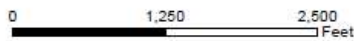
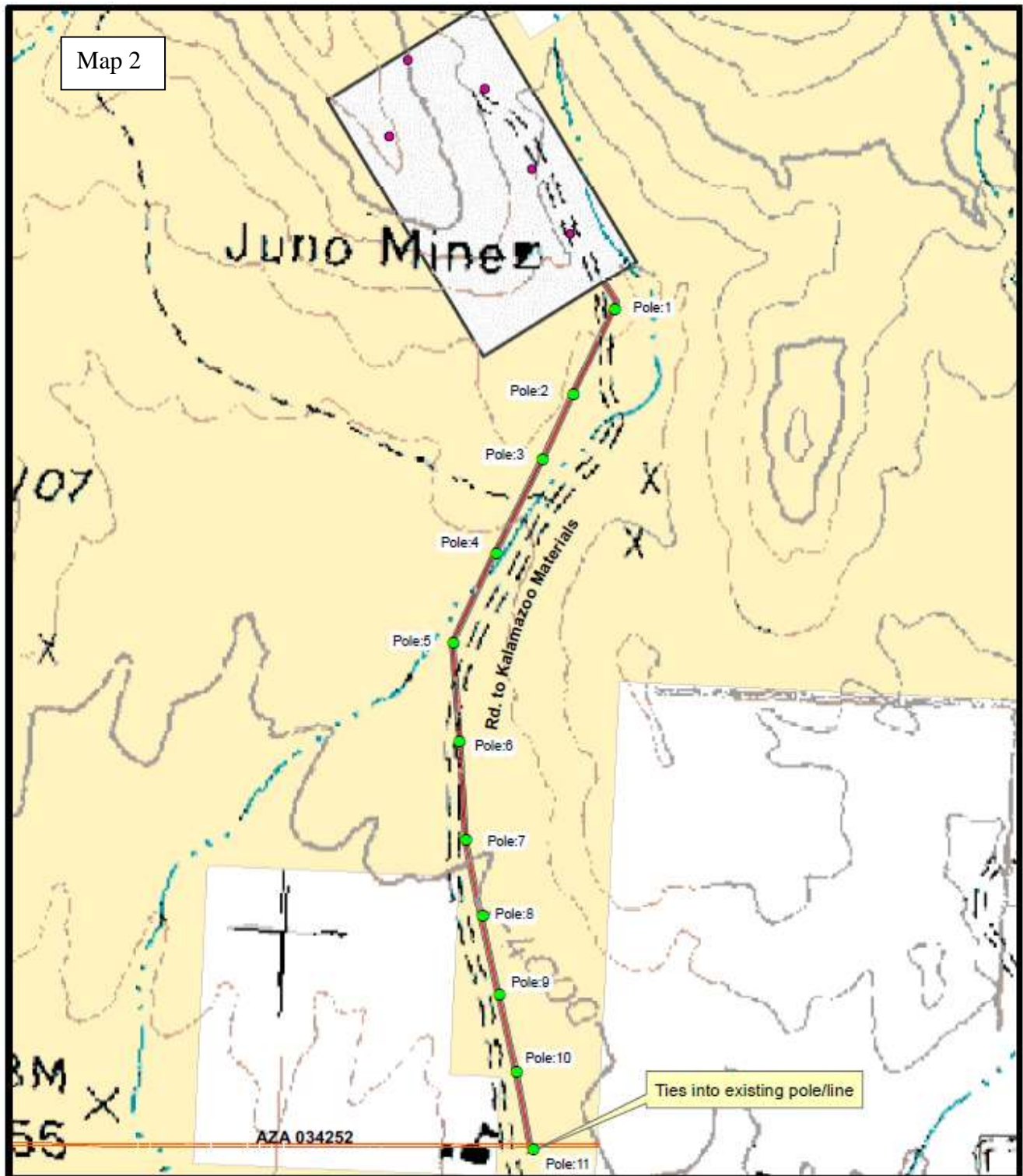
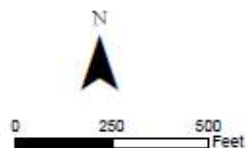


Exhibit A - December 16, 2013
Map Created by: M Troche

Map 2



- Existing AZA 034352
- Payne Property
- AZA 036143
- Poles on Private
- Proposed poles - BLM



UNS - Payne Extension AZA 036143

Exhibit A - December 16, 2013
Map Created by: M Troche

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The affected environment was considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in the KFO Project Scoping Form found in the Administrative Record for this proposal (Table 1). Resources of concern that are either not present in the project area or would not be affected to a degree that requires detailed analysis will not be discussed here. Resources which could be affected by the proposed action or alternatives are discussed below Table 1.

Table 1. PROJECT RESOURCE Review			
Resources Considered	Not Present	Present and Not Affected	Present and/or Potentially Affected
Air Quality*	X		
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*	X		
Cultural and Historic*		X	
Environmental Justice* / Socioeconomics	X		
Floodplains*	X		
Grazing	X		
Hazardous or Solid Waste*	X		
Invasive and Non-native Species*	X		
Land Use	X		
Migratory Birds*			X
Native American Religious Concerns*	X		
Prime and Unique Farmland*	X		
Threatened and Endangered Species*		X	
Vegetation			X
Visual Resources			X
Water Quality*	X		
Wetland or Riparian Zones*	X		
Wild and Scenic Rivers*	X		
Wilderness*	X		
Wildlife			X
* Consideration Required By Law or Executive Order			

Cultural Resources

The town of Chloride is known for its mining history which dates back to the mid-1840s. Structures and mining equipment dating back to this time period are common throughout the area. Historical artifacts are found near the locations of old mining operations. Ethnographic and historic documentation indicate that the general area was utilized throughout history and prehistory, as well. Common site types in the hill behind the town of Chloride include seasonal camps, rock shelters, artifact scatters and historic ranching sites.

Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat, and Migratory Birds

The affected environment is directly northwest of town of Chloride, Arizona, from County Highway 125 (Old Highway 62), to the patented Juno mining claim. The proposed ROW runs alongside the graded road to Kalamazoo Minerals. This road is regularly maintained to accommodate the daily traffic of heavy equipment and rock-hauling trucks to and from Kalamazoo Minerals. Elevation is approximately 4,000 feet. The vegetation community is dominated by catclaw acacia (*Acacia greggii*), Palo Christi (*Canotia halocantha*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), flatter buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) and white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*). The fauna is dominated by various bird, lizard, snake, and rodent species with coyote, bobcat, and raptors being the dominant predators.

Threatened and Endangered Species

There is no habitat for any listed species in the project area with the exception that the project area is located within the designated non-essential experimental population area of the California condor. The nonessential experimental population status applies to condors only when they are within the experimental population area. Outside of this area condors are considered endangered.

Visual Resource Management (VRM)

The proposed action is within VRM Class II. The objective for Class II VRM allows for changes which may subordinate the landscape character. The town is significantly developed, with residences, businesses, powerlines, roads, and other developments.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

A. Proposed Action Alternative

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are known to exist in the vicinity of the project. The locations of the 11 poles that will be on federal land avoid the historical mining features existing in the area. It is not expected that any cultural material will be impacted by the project; however, a stipulation of the grant will be that if any cultural artifacts are discovered the BLM must be notified.

Vegetation, Wildlife Habitat, and Migratory Birds

The new powerline will result approximately 0.01 acres of vegetation and wildlife/migratory bird habitat loss. Access will be via the road to Kalamazoo Materials. It is anticipated that approximately 0.01 acres would be periodically impacted by vehicle travel within the ROW area for access spurs. Use of these spurs would only occur during construction of the line and it is estimated that this disturbance would be short term (lasting less than one or two days). Any vegetation crushed by cross-country travel on the spur roads is expected to recover within three years of crushing. During cross country travel most vegetation would be avoided reducing the

likelihood of nest disturbances. Electrocutation of raptors from the new powerline would be avoided by building the line using raptor proof specifications. The overall residual impacts to vegetation, wildlife and migratory bird habitat from the proposed action would yield a net gain of approximately 0.02 acres of disturbance.

Threatened and Endangered Species

California condor: There would be no effects to the California condor as condors have not been documented in the project area Chris Parish, Peregrine Fund, 2013 *in* Unisource, 2013. There is no nest, roost or perching habitat is known in the project area. The paucity of large game animals within the project area would preclude Condor foraging in the project area. Condors prefer to forage on large carcasses but opportunistically would forage on smaller animals. They are visually attracted to their food sources and therefore are less likely to see small dead animals. Big game densities within Mohave Desert shrub habitat and livestock densities are low because of low biomass production. The condor's main foraging areas are on the Kaibab Plateau (mostly north Kaibab), Paria Plateau, south rim of the Grand Canyon, and Colob Canyon area just northeast of Zion National Park (2005, pers. comm. Kathy Sullivan, Condor Biologist, AGFD and Chris Parish, Condor Biologist, Peregrine Fund). They forage in the other areas because of higher densities of big game, left-over hunter kills and because there are suitable perching areas such as large ponderosa pine trees (large perch site needed because of the large size of condors) and cliffs.

Condors prefer cliff habitat because cliffs are more likely to produce updrafts for soaring (2005, pers. comm. C. Parish). Both C. Parish and K. Sullivan, 2005 (pers. comm.) state that they doubted that condors would use the desert areas east of U.S Highway 93.

Visual Resource Management (VRM)

The proposed powerline would be seen from the town of Chloride, from the Payne residence, and for those traveling along the road to Kalamazoo Materials. The proposed action is within VRM Class II. The objectives for VRM management in this area would be met.

B. No Action Alternative

The impacts from the No Action Alternative would be that the Payne residence would not receive electrical power. The current power source to the property is by solar generator.

C. Cumulative Impacts

The historic mining town of Chloride was founded in 1863 and experienced spurts and declines in growth over the years. The town has developed into a tourist attraction for those travelling the Highway 93. Current population of the town of Chloride is approximately 400, and dispersed residences and ranch homes spread out from the town limits. These residences, several mining operations, and both old and new power line alignments are the past and current impacts to the affected environment. T

DESCRIPTION OF MITIGATION MEASURES AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS:

The terms, conditions, and stipulations of the proposed ROW are attached.

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED:

Preparers: Maria Troche, BLM KFO Land Law Examiner
Environmental Coordinator: Ramone McCoy
Len Marceau, Outdoor Recreation Planner (VRM)
Tim Watkins, Archaeologist
Rebecca Peck, Wildlife Biologist

REFERENCES:

Unisource Electric, Inc. 2013. A Biological Evaluation for a Distribution Line Rebuild between State Route 93 and Chloride, Mohave County, Arizona. Prepared by, Cornerstone Environmental Consulting, LLC.

Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0007-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

/s/ Ruben A. Sanchez
Field Manager, Kingman

1-27-2014
Date

DECISION RECORD

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0007-EA

Decision: The decision is to authorize ROW AZA 036143 as described in the Proposed Action Alternative and as described in the terms and conditions of the grant.

Rationale for Decision: ROW AZA 036143 will be authorized because the facilities provide valuable electrical service to the Payne residence and the impacts are not expected to be significant.

Stipulations: See the attached ROW Grant amendment.

/s/ Ruben A. Sanchez
Field Manager, Kingman

1-27-2014
Date

KINGMAN FIELD OFFICE SCOPING FORM

Proposal: AZA 036143 New Electrical Distribution Line Authorization

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0007-EA

Doc Location: K:\Nepa\AA-Completed NEPA Documents\2014 NEPA Documents \ 2014-0007-EA PayneExtension

Land Description: G&SRM, T. 24 N., R. 18 W, sec. 33 and T. 23 N., R. 18 W., sec. 4.

Applicant: Unisource Electric, Inc.

INVOLVEMENT: Indicate in the left column which disciplines need to provide information into the EA/CX.

Needed Input (X)	Discipline	Signature
	Lands	
	Minerals	
	Range	
	Wild Horse and Burro	
	General Recreation	
X	Cultural and Paleontological Resources	/s/ Tim Watkins 01/14/2014
	Wilderness	
	Soils	
	Surface and Groundwater Quality/Water Rights	
	Air Quality	
X	Wildlife	/s/ Rebecca Peck 01/23/2014
X	Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals	/s/ Rebecca Peck 01/23/2014
X	Migratory Birds	/s/ Rebecca Peck 01/23/2014
	Surface Protection	
	Hazardous Materials	
	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	
X	Visual Resources	/s/ Matt Driscoll 01/27/2014
	Socio-Economics/Environmental Justice	
	General Botany/Noxious Weeds	
	Energy Policy	

Writer: /s/ Maria Troche

Date: 12/17/2013

Environmental Coordinator: /s/ Ramone McCoy

Date: 12/17/2013

Field Manager: /s/ Ruben A. Sanchez

Date: 01/27/2014